

REMARKSClaim Status

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Claims 1-6 have been withdrawn. This paper amends claims 7, 9, 12, and 14. This paper also submits new claims 17-20. Of the claims that are not withdrawn, claims 7 and 12 are the independent claims of the application.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

In response to the rejection of claims 7-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph Applicants amend both independent claims 7 and 12 to use the phrase “true proprietary part numbers” at appropriate points of these claims. Dependent claims 9 and 14 are amended accordingly.

New Claims

Claims 17 and 18 respectively depend from claims 7 and 12 and recite that the universal part numbers are numerical, alpha-numerical, or part numbers involving symbols. These embodiments are described at page 11, first paragraph. Claims 19 and 20 respectively depend from claims 8 and 13, reciting that the step (or instructions) for determining availability of one or more parts associated

with said set of universal part numbers comprises sending (or generating) a second document to each of the different suppliers or manufacturers. The second document for a given supplier or manufacturer contains any universal part numbers and any other part numbers that are associated with that supplier or manufacturer.

Art Rejections

Claims 7-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hinckley (US 2002/0055886 A1). In comparing the teachings of Hinckley to the present invention, it is useful to consider Applicant's goal of providing a system of part numbers that are easily understood by multiple users in a networking environment for supply chain management, design collaboration, or the purchase or sale of services or fungible goods. One contrast with Hinckley is that Applicant's translation of proprietary part numbers to include in various commercial documents takes into account the familiarity of the numbers to given types of user. Another point of distinction is that unlike Hinckley, Applicant's universal part numbers are not just used to identify associated parts (or acceptable substitutes), but also to help users recognize such associated parts.

Hinckley does not disclose or suggest the recited features of independent claim 7, at least with respect to the step of "generating shipping papers or electronic records using the set of proprietary part numbers originally provided by the user translated from the set of true proprietary part numbers that summarizes a transaction involving the parts". In finding claim 7 obvious over Hinckley, the Examiner notes that Hinckley does not disclose using the set of proprietary part

numbers originally provided by the user translated from the set of true part numbers that summarizes a transaction involving the parts. However, this step is said to be obvious to the person of ordinary skill in the art given the goals of reducing procurement cycle time and improving access to competitive pricing and available inventories. Applicant respectfully submits this is not the case, in part since this step follows steps of determining the availability of one or more part, and storing a record of true proprietary part numbers and amounts of parts ordered or backordered. Rather one would expect shipping papers or electronic records to include just the true proprietary part numbers and identification information for the associated manufacturer or supplier of the ordered parts, even though these data might not be as familiar to the recipient as the first set of proprietary part numbers. Applicant's method for translating part numbers to include in various commercial documents takes into account the familiarity of the translated part numbers to given types of user. Factors that bear on the familiarity of part numbers to given users include for example the pertinence of the users' own part numbers, numbers of a frequently used supplier, and other familiar numbers (page 13, lines 18-22). These considerations are not taught by Hinckley.

Hinckley does not disclose or suggest the recited features of independent claim 12, at least with respect to the instruction for "generating shipping papers or electronic records using the set of proprietary part numbers originally provided by the user translated from the set of true proprietary part numbers that summarizes a transaction involving the parts". The arguments presented above as to claim 7 apply as well to claim 12.

Various dependent claims describe additional nonobvious features of Applicant's translation of part numbers based upon familiarity to users, and use of recognizable universal part numbers.

Claim 9 relates to the steps in claim 7 of “translating said first set of proprietary part numbers into a set of universal part numbers” and of “translating said set of true proprietary part numbers into numbers originally provided by the user”. Claim 9 states that these steps “are performed by a translation module that translates one or more proprietary part numbers associated with said first document into different part numbers that the recipient of said shipping papers or electronic records readily understands”. One of the features of claim 9 is a set of universal part numbers “that the recipient of said shipping papers or electronic records readily understands”. This feature is not disclosed or suggested by Hickley.

Hinckley uses Universal Part Numbers (UPNs) purely as a way of grouping and organizing components that are acceptable or potentially acceptable substitutes (Approved Substitute Components – ADC’s - and Inferred Equivalent Components – IECs). The UPNs are machine-assigned indexes such as 1.1 and 2.1 that clearly are not chosen for their relationship to the comparable components they identify (see para. 0064 et seq. and Figure 8). UPNs are not used as user inputs in searching for components, rather they provide data linkages after users enter data such as IPNs, MPNs, and CB or CM names (para. 0082). Familiarity of the UPNs generated by his system is not a pertinent consideration for Hinckley.

By contrast, Applicant describes universal numbers as designations that can help users recognize comparable parts or other comparable entities identified by these numbers. For example in the case of job titles, a universal number may be used to identify comparable jobs (p. 4, lines 11-17); a universal job title may be assigned to the comparable positions (p. 15, lines 8-10).

The arguments above as to patentability of claims 7 and 9 also support that patentability of claim 10, in which the translation module is used to prepare commercial documents.

New claims 17 and 18 provide that universal part numbers can be numeric, alphanumeric, or can involve symbols. This flexibility in format is conducive to selecting UPNs that are more likely to be identified by users with groups of associated parts. By contrast, as noted above, Hinckley uses indexed numeric UPNs and is not concerned with user recognition of these numeric UPNs.

New claim 19 provides that the step for determining availability of one or more parts associated with said set of universal part numbers comprises sending a second document to each of the different suppliers or manufacturers. The second document for a given supplier or manufacturer contains any universal part numbers and any other part numbers that are associated with that supplier or manufacturer. Thus for example a second document could solicit a competitive quotation from a given supplier or manufacturer for the products identified with the universal part numbers sent to that supplier or manufacturer. This would not be appropriate using Hinckley's system, which does not employ meaningful UPNs.

The arguments above for patentability of dependent claims 9, 10, 17 and 19 apply as well to claims 14, 15, 18 and 20 respectively. As regards the dependent claims not discussed, these claims should be patentable over the references together with their base claims.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are patentable over the art of record, and under 35 U.S.C. § 112. To discuss any matter pertaining to the present application, the Examiner is invited to call the practitioner of record, Steven Swernofsky, at (650) 947-0700.

Having made an effort to bring the application in condition for allowance, a timely notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 10, 2008

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